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A VISION OF ST. BRIDE

AND OTHER POEMS

MRS. E. G. PEMBER

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A Vision of St. Bride

and

OTHER POEMS.

BY
MRS. E. G. PEMBER

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A Vision of St. Bride.

(Bridghit-Nam-Bratta)

A LEGEND OF IRELAND AND THE HEBRIDES.

Introduction

'Twas in the darkness of the Pagan age,
That Ireland's history first began,
When many a bold sea-rover, in his vessel frail,
Ventured to cross the stormy sea, from sunny Spain,
And seek adventure new, upon unknown shores.
Others soon followed—From Phenicia remote,
And from her colonies, men faced the perils
Of the Western sea, seeking wealth, or homes.
And founded families and warlike clans,
From whom descended a race of powerful kings,
Who shared, with many a feud, the lonely isle.

No Christian worship theirs, till Blessed Patrick came,
But strange beliefs, and secret rites,
Derived from Eastern climes,
Taught by Druid priests, who subtle wisdom brought
From the wondrous Orient. These ruled with power,
And with mystic rune—Worship of gods, symbolic,
Magic spells—enforced with human sacrifice
In hidden woods, or on altars built of stone,
And such their influence o'er those they ruled,
That none dared disobey the mandates they decreed.

Fierce war did rage across the Irish sea,
In Britain, and in mighty Rome:
The grasp of Roman Eagle had not yet
Been laid upon secluded Ireland,
The factious chiefs, jealous of each others sway

Sought each to rule supreme,
And Erin's people were divided among themselves.

In time that consecrated Saint,
The holy Patrick, came with zeal
To sow the seed of Heavenly Truth,
And chase the evil spirits from the hearts
Of chiefs dissentious—He overcame the Druid Priests,
Ended their baleful sway—and on Tara's sacred hill
Preached Jesus Crucified!
Then was the winter of those years of sin
Brought to a close—Its frozen heart did melt
And thaw—when men believed and prayed,
And owned the Blessed Faith, whose salutary seed,
Sown in their earthly lives, took deeper root
And grew with vigor—Hearts did pulse with joy
Upon a re-awakened Ireland.

Bridghit.

One royal chief a beauteous daughter had,
Fair as the morning light, hair like the golden sun!
Of all the maidens of her ancient race,
Not one in grace and charm with her compared,
Bridghit her name—"Daughter of the Light"
Foreknown of God, predestined for a life
Of special sanctity, by Him—
And she, sweet maid, within her father's home,
Performed the duties of her simple life,
Milking and caring for the gentle kine,
Nor scorning menial office for all who were in need.

To her 'twas given to gaze with reverent eyes,
Into the clear cool depths of that rare spring,
The Fountain of Perpetual Youth!
Wherein she saw reflection of the lovely Face
Of her, "The Blessed among Women."
And ever after, her countenance did wear
The sweet and holy likeness of that Virgin pure.

The Vision.

One summer night while wrapped in slumber deep,
To her it was vouchsafed to dream,
And in the quiet of those mystic hours,
'Twas given to her, in vision clear—
To see with mortal eyes,
The mystery of "The Word made Flesh"!
She dreamed that she had made a voyage perilous,
Across the stormy waste of that wild sea,
Which encircles Erin's lonely shores,
And after many days of wandering toil,
Sharing the miseries of pilgrims of strange race,
And hearing unknown tongues,
She thought her feet were stayed at last,
And she had found a home—
And in a land of strangers had become
A little serving maid, within a little Inn
Of Bethlehem; and for awhile
All memories of Erin were forgot—

Around the Inn, the solemn hills arose,
Verdant and wild—Strange beasts did lurk
Amid the wilderness, and tangled woods around;
Upon the grassy slopes, rude shepherds kept,
A nightly watch o'er numerous flocks of sheep.
Among the hills were grottoes not a few,
Scattered, rocky, dark and deep caves,
Where distant travellers ever used to find
A resting place, and shelter safe,
For wearied man, and jaded, burdened beast.

From Rome Imperial, proud mistress of the world,
The Edict came from Cæsar's hand.
Issued the harsh decree, and for many months,
It had been carried far and near to all her colonies

By desert post, and runners swift, that all might know.
Long journies, toilsome and fatiguing were performed
Ere it could be complete, and every man obey
The mandate to enroll his name, upon the records
Of his native place.

In that south land, the season had been dry,
Wells and springs but scantily supplied,
The precious gift of living waters, greatly prized,
Was scarce, and o'er the parched land, a drought prevailed,
And seemed to be a signal of God's wrath upon a sinful world.
As travellers belated nearer drew,
Towards the little town of Bethlehem,
The ancient Well of David's erstwhile home
Was guarded night and day, and under
Supervision of the strictest kind.

One night the keeper of the little Inn
Took vessels in his hand, and with his servants,
An escort armed, did make his way,
To await his turn among the crowd,
Which gathered fast, about the gates of Bethlehem
Enclosed for the coming night.
Each anxious for his share of scant supply
For his own relief, and his poor thirsty beast,

But ere the keeper left his house,
He bade the little maid remain, and watch,
For other guests—and lest that she
Should feel the pangs of hunger or of thirst
He measured out a stoup of water, from the cooling jar,
And left a bannock of unleavened bread
For her, until his safe return.

There in the twilight of that eastern night
She sat, and gazed upon the violet-dusky sky,
Lit with the glory of unnumbered stars.

She saw a golden planet hanging low
Upon the far horizon—Unknown to her,
It was the Promised Star of Jacob, which even then
Did lead the Orient Kings upon their weary way.
Palms and cypress gloomed out darkly black
From out the heated distant sands.
Roofs and domes gleamed snowy white,
In the near-by town—while exhausted travellers,
Camels, asses, bullocks, drowsed around
The court-yard of the Inn,
Prostrate in heavy slumber on the dusty earth,
Or in the dusky caves, after the long hot day.

Two strangers stayed their tired feet,
Before the open door, and asked for food,
And shelter for the coming night.
From far off Nazareth, these seven days,
Slowly had they made their way
O'er hill and dale, torrent and stony roads,
And past the Temple City—Thence on to Bethlehem
The lowly pair had come, to obey the wide decree.
And be enrolled in the ancestral home.
The man was of a noble mien and countenance,
In gait and aspect. "The son of many kings."
In humble garb, with toil-worn hands,
He stood majestic, scion of a royal race—
The royal race of David, Israel's Shepherd King.

The veiled maiden, for thus she seemed to be,
In girlish form and look, so sweetly fair,
Gentle, mild, and meek, she sat upon her limping mule,
With downcast eyes, most patiently, with present signs
Of her approaching motherhood—so deathly faint
With sore fatigue, and pain, yet waiting on
In uncomplaining silence.
Joseph, leaning on his pilgrims' staff,
Asked the favor of a resting place,

For food and drink, from Bridghit's kindly hands,
With gracious look and words of sympathy
She gave them of her all, the water and the cake,
Which wondrously did multiply and gave,
The famished pilgrims abundant nourishment
In this time of pressing need.

She led them to the shed where meek eyed oxen stood,
And patient asses tethered there, in quiet of repose—
The mangers had been filled with straw and provender
Ere the owners left the animals to a well earned rest.
There was no room for these poor travellers,
Within the little crowded Inn.
And thus beside the dusty beasts of toil
They sought and found a refuge
For that eventful night!

Bridghit returned to watch once more,
But fell asleep—Awaking suddenly
It seemed to her, she heard a rapture in the midnight sky—
The echoing air was filled with heavenly melodies,
Resounding through the darkened hills,
And all the firmament did glow
With golden flame—a glorious light
Beyond all other ever seen!
"As when the morning stars
Did sing together,
And all the Sons of God
Did shout for joy!"
A dazzling light shone o'er the stable door
"A glory far beyond the sunset or the dawn"
With trembling feet and beating heart,
Bridghit across the court-yard went,
Past sleeping men who lay around
In heavy stupor of a slumber deep,
Past uncouth shapes crouched in bulky form
Upon the hard and close-packed ground.

She entered in that lowly rock-hewn byre;
There on her face prostrate did fall;
In trance of spirit, and with awe-struck soul—
("Once in her childhood had she seen
The image of the "Blessed among Women"
Within the magic water of the Well
Of Everlasting Youth—and she had prayed
To bear the likeness evermore
Of that dear Face reflected then.")
(It now recalled the Island of her birth
And all its dim enchanted dells,
And isles all shadowy, filled with the mystic dreams
Of an unknown past!)

The Holy Babe was smiling in His Mother's eyes,
Joseph, absorbed in ardent fervor, bent
Beside the Virgin and Her Son—
The cattle all in bright-eyed homage kneel
Before the humble manger Throne—
Ethereal forms of angels bright
Float above the Mother and Her Child.
And fill the cave with joyous song,
Entrancing melodies from Heaven's own choirs.

The Babe slept and Bridghit tenderly
Did lift Him from the slender arms
Of Her—"The Blessed among Women!"
She wrapped Him in her brattach warm,
For soon the breeze would come with chill
And bring with it the dawning of the day,
And, then again—she fell asleep—

And, when again she seemed to wake,
The late moon was arisen, 'twas early dawn—
The glory too had passed—The rocky cave was void,
Led by the Star of Love, she sought her Lord,
And Her, "The Blessed among Women,"

Out through the gates, where on the greening slopes,
Up by the hills, the dews hung heavy,
She found the traces of their going.
Her dream was o'er—She had risen to find
It was a Vision granted her, by Our Lord Himself,
And in the foot-steps of that Little Child
She followed them in all the days to come,
Unto the Mount of Olives
And to the Hill—called Calvary.

On Erin's Isle she lived and died
But by a riven oak, first formed
A saintly sisterhood of maids,
All sweetly pure im holiness of life.
Their Abbess she—Kildare their Shrine
Models of Mary, Queen Immaculate
This their aim for all their days,
Till death their souls so innocent did take
To join the maiden band of Mary Blest,
And Bridghit, saint of women saints
Before all others, led the way.

So, it was sung long time ago,
Around the winter fires of Erin's Isle,
"Noble is Bride the gentle,
Fair on her knees,
Noble the King of Glory,
On her breast—Son of the Moon
Son of the Sun—Son of Mary,
Of Godlike mind."
And the song is heard today
Which tells of Bride with hurrying feet
Across the court-yard of the Bethlehem Inn,
And of her crooning to the sleeping Babe.

Wrapped in her mantle warm,
All through the swelling harmonies

Of early Mass on Christmas Morn
He listens with her, to the angels' songs.

And so the women of that ancient Isle,
Still sing, as they spin, or card, or tease
The snowy wool!
And in the gloaming yet be heard,
"It was Bride the Fair
Who went on her knees,
It is the King of Glory
Who is in her lap,
Christ, the Priest above us
For He is the Foster son of Bride
Bride of the Blessings
The little Foster son of Bride."

And in the northern isles of Scotia's land
When Christmas Tide draws near,
And brings the manger throne;
The Gael still proclaims the glory,
Virtues and honor of Fair Bride.

When early Spring comes dancing in
And decks the Earth with new-born flowers.
When Blessed Candlemas arrives
And priestly prayers o'er waxen candles said
"That the dark perils of this mortal life
Be all left behind
That we may all attain
The never fading Light."
Then as the faithful slowly pace along
Believers they in all God's promises,
Lo! they see the Vision of the earliest Feast,
When Mary, all Immaculate.
Obeyed the Jewish Law, and to the Temple went,
Sweet Bride was also there ('tis said);
Model of the Virgin—Mother Maid,

In whiteness of her spotless soul,
And clad in glistening robes of purity,
Walking before the Mother of the Lord,
With candle in her hand she led the way
Ascending with her, the steps so steep
Which go up to the Temple of her God.
And then the Benediction of a holy Peace,
Descends, and rests upon them all,
Softening the sad prediction, which Simeon made,
"A sword of anguished suffering should pierce
The gentle Virgin's loving Mother heart."

And since that time, St. Bride's own day of birth,
Is called the Birthday of the Spring;
The Irish maidens born upon that day,
Who bear her glorious name of "Light,"
Offer their prayers and homage true
To that dear saint of saints,
Who took as model of her holy life,
Mary, Ever Blessed of all Womanhood.

Adapted from "Iona Legends."

PART II.

The Seasons

"All the days of the earth,
Seed time and harvest;
Cold and heat,
Summer and winter,
Night and Day,
Shall not cease."

Genesis ch. 8., *v.*

The Wooing and Wedding of Spring.

Now gentle Spring comes slowly on her way,
With downcast face, and tender wistful eyes,
Filled with frozen tears—her hair confined with crystal wreaths;
And timid feet all shod in sandals grey.
From Winter's frowning castle drear, she creeps,
With lagging steps, for long has she a captive been,
But now escaped her watchful ice-clad guards.

Her mantle green is draped with snowy flakes,
And ragged remnants cling about its hem;
Torn nests, with rotten leaves, loose thorns and briars,
Bearded and sharp, clog every step she takes.
The ground so chill—the air so keen and damp,
While last year's faded flowers and leaves
Hang mould'ring on each unkempt bush and tree.

Grim winter follows her—urgently grasps her skirts,
Averse to let her go—among the frozen haunts
Of the eternal arctic solitudes, to reign
The Queen of that domain of meltless snows,
A dwelling place of rigid death—of dark despair!
Illumed by streaming Polar lights—
But all unconquered by the fiery sun.

Here would he have her for his own; most roughly
Doth he woo the tender maid, and guarded her
With wardens fierce—wild tempests, bitter blasts,
Legions of sleet and hail; pursues her in her flight
With howling winds and freezing breath;
Swiftly she takes her course to keep her tryst
With her dear spouse, the ardent Summertime.

He mocketh her with boisterous cries and breezes numb,
Affrights her with his noisy hail and deafening winds.
Oh, bleak and savage is the wooing of this Winter King!
Dissembler, too, he feigns to be the likeness of her spouse.
Forthwith her precious treasures are deceived
As he unlocks the chambers of their sleep, and makes believe
The Summer is at hand! Then in malicious spite,
Sends forth in savage wrath his troops of sleet and storm
To kill unwary buds, and slays them if they venture out.

But much-enduring Spring enwraps herself
Within her filmy robes, and weeping, bides her time;
For well she knows her lover in his lusty strength
Is hastening from the South to embrace his patient bride.
Tuneful harbingers are on the way, with joyous songs,
Old melodies, yet ever new, the theme that doth not change,
"Faithful and true is he—fervent love unfailing,
"By Summer's burning sword foul Winter shall be slain;
"And with his hideous crew be banished far away,
"His fruitless wooing of fair Spring be at an end!"

Behold! the land rejoicing—sweet May is dancing in
With merriment, and bridal flowers; a gorgeous retinue
Attends to greet and welcome back the lovely bride.
At peep of dawn the singing birds begin to pipe and chant
Early matin prayers, and varied notes of praise,
And Nature offers choice perfumes to the Most High,
Her grateful incense from the thankful universe!

The earth buds up the greening grass; the awakened brooks,
With silvery voices, loudly sing, swiftly running to the sea,
In reverent homage to extol their Maker's name!
Flower after flower with smiling face blooms out in charm
And color, from out its cradle bed, to greet the Lord of Love;
The trees in variant shades of green are dressed,
And shelter busy inmates, building skillful homes,
With beak and claw—snug nests for nestlings yet to be.

Bright insects come from out the hidden nooks,
To work or play, each in its own blameless course,
Flitting the hours of each brief life in joy and ecstacy,
Until its eventide doth end its day.
Soft breezes warm the once chilled air which Winter cast
Behind his back in spite—Oh, 'tis a joyful happy time
For merry youth or saddened age!

When beauteous Spring and jocund Summertime are linked together
In bonds of strength and purest nuptial love,
Glad guests from far and near are hastening fast
To welcome back the Bridegroom with the Bride,
Each one arrayed in marriage robes to grace the feast—
The wedding day of Spring, the glorious day
Of perfect love and joys as yet untold.

From dawn till eve the ceaseless choirs sing
In unison with all created things, for all aspire
To emulate the praises of the Summer King and Queen.
Fair maids, and lovers strong and brave,
Help swell the chorus of the mirthful hours,
In song and dance, and children join the throng,
For this the time when rapture and delight hold sway,
And sorrow is forgot on such a holiday!

Since lovely Spring and amorous Summer in his power
Join hand and heart and blithely lead the way.
Until the fruits of their true love are sanctified
And placed upon the Matron Autumn's generous lap,
By her preserved abundantly for future use,
As food for all their children dear
Till Winter comes again to woo
The peerless Maid for his unwilling guest.

—DEDHAM TRANSCRIPT.

Midsummer

Reflections.

Now gentle Spring, her welcome mission o'er
Prepares the way for blithesome summer days;
Then flies with winged feet to other lands.
Her voice triumphant, exultant, sounds with cheer
From out the wilderness of Winter's joyless sphere;
Commanding charm and beauty to appear.

The fields are plowed, the seed is sown
In faith, within the furrowed land
Prepared for copious rains, sent freely down,
And gentle dews from heaven to fall around,
With constant prayers for bounteous crops and grain
And fruits in plenty, each in its season to obtain,

The soft and cooling winds will surely blow
To abate the ardor of a fervid sun;
And we rejoice who work, and watch, and know,
The mysteries of the teeming earth;
Who wait to see the tiny blade or bud,
Emerging from the cradle of its birth.

The Summer warm and fertile now is here
With all her perfect days, and mystic nights;
The sky cerulean in the sunlit air,
The purple heavens illumed with burning lights;
In silent majesty they ever shine,
And voiceless praise the "Hand Divine."
The cold round moon her ceaseless journey runs,
In pallid radiance drawn from the western sun,
Surveys the Earth, revolving far beneath,
With never changing countenance, until her death—

The lofty trees put on new leaves in shaded tints of vivid green
Odorous and perfumed, blossoms pink and white are seen:
Predicting grateful fruits—acidulous and sweet,
Refreshment to the parched lips—to those who faint with heat,
The leafy boughs afford sheltered homes for plumaged birds,
Of every kind and song, with their numerous progeny.
And grateful shade from noon-tide heat, for peaceful herds.

Insects clad in coats of every sombre hue
Creep, crawl, or mix with those whose painted wings
In colors bright, share the brief life of humbler things,
Fanned by the scented balmy breeze
They dance around like jewels in the sun,
A mazy whirling crowd, till twilight cease.
Short is their span of life, ere day is gone,
They die, and others take their place ere rosy dawn.

The generous earth buds forth the greening grass,
Thrusts upward from the sward, her diverse flowers,
Breathing spicy incense to the rising sun,
They glad the heart of man, frail emblems as they pass!
But now he sings for joy, all things being now re-born.
This is God's annual miracle, each Summer it is done,
And old and young unite in praising Him.
With all creation joining in the universal hymn.

Now Labor's weary toilers freed from weary task
Speed to shore or mountain, seeking well earned rest,
And gaze with reverent eyes upon the mighty hills
Which lift their stately heads aloft, and in the sunshine bask,
Stretched in long drawn file, single, or in groups,
Snow clad—emblems of strength sublime
Steadfast in firm repose until the end of time

Others prefer the inviting shore, and looking seaward,
Lie in the sands and dream of foreign lands,

Perhaps they wander back in thought—
Each to his childhood's home, his parents' hearts and hands!
Awaiting his delayed return?
Others yet, sadly meditate on naught,
But memories old, when youth and hope did burn,
And dream-ships fraught with precious trust
Sailed on, sailed on young life's alluring sea
With all its promised wealth—never to return!

Inland the village children newly loosed from school
Romp, and play in noisy glee along the dusty street,
Or flocking to the meadows help to gather in
The new-mown hay, dried by the burning heat;
Lying in tangled mass about the stubbled field
Or else in mimic warfare they engage, while laughter pealed,
And boyish feet outran to see who the first fork should wield
Or mount the fragrant load, in mirth to reach the barn.

After fierce contest o'er some well played game,
Older lads whose side had won the honor and the fame,
Of village leaders—swiftly make their way—their goal
A well beloved place—"The old swimmin hole"
Wherein their fathers, not so very long ago,
Were won't to swim and bathe, and seldom came to woe—

Less active, some disdain athletic sport—
Who pass the lazy hours in other ways
Congenial to the taste—'Tis their delight to indulge
In line and rod—seeking lonely tarns—
Or without haste—find quiet streams, the sort
From which to lure the wary trout
From haunts where man hath never trod
Beneath a rocky bank, or pool or tree
The finny victim of the tempting bait
Is caught at last, and meets his fate.

Oh! Summer time is such a bonny time

In which to find the restful peace and strength,
For daily toil, and mental poise, our duties to perform—
Tranquil the early morning prime—
Fiery the noontide heat, when Nature craves repose,
Quiet the dusky evening, and its peace sublime.
As twilight stillness undisturbed, to darkness grows.

His mighty course now run, until another day
Behold! the glory of the setting sun, upon his western way,
On gorgeous clouds he sinks to evening rest,
As royal monarch on his couch of gold
While robes of flame him visibly enfold
And glorify his splendor in the blazing West,
To ageing eyes, the wondrous scene appears,
The Vision of that far off land, of which they have no fear;
For they expect to see ere long the Beauty of the King,
Clad in His robes of light, and Death has lost its sting.

Oh beauteous Summer! Fairer e'en than Spring
With her uncertain hopes and frequent tears.
Summer brings peace, and ever calm delight;
Sorrow and pain, pomp and clamor take their flight,
Before her daily loveliness—She blooms and gives no sign
Of coming evil — nought but radiance of the sun benign.

Cometh the gloaming—under shadowing tree,
Through open glade, or lonely lane by hedgerows screened—
Lovers hand in hand are strolling, far apart,
From prying eyes and curious ears—each heart to heart,
Whisper the old sweet tale of "Love's young dream"—
Few are the words they say—In silence acquiesce—
Visions of future bliss—joy perpetual, never to depart.

For, 'Tis home where'er the heart is,
Where'er its loved ones dwell,
In cities or in palaces,
Thronged haunts or mossy dell

Hearts follow dear ones ever,
And thus o'er wave and wild,
The maiden with her lover walks
The mother with her child."

Once more the silence of the night glides on
"A dewy freshness fills the silent air"
The soothing night which comfort brings
To sad and suffering ones, the goodly friend of care.
Lovers are loth to part—reluctantly they wait
Without the ready latch of the little rustic gate—
The aged seek a sleepless couch, and softly mourn
Departed youth and summer days, for them,
Never to return!
The children sleep—In healthy slumber they,
Incapable of being disturbed, so strenuous was their play;
All safe at home—save those who friendless roam,
To whom no touch of kindred or domestic love e'er known—

The silvery moon peeps through the quivering trees,
No mortal voice is heard, yet whispering sounds affright,
Nor mortal ear discern or understand,
The mystic utterance of a summer night.
It is the midnight hour—Elves and busy sprite,
The little people of enchanted woods, invisible, unseen,
Meet in the moonlit space, with elfin bugle horn,
They summon forth the fairies from their distant haunts
From bush, from briar and mossy cell, tripping they come
In fluttering troops, with gauzy wings and filmy robes,
To share the revels they appear, and frisk, and dance,
The livelong night—upon the jewelled grassy ring
Encircling the ancient gnarled oak,
Which country folk do shun—for fear
Of evil spirits lurking there.
Without restraint they dance, without a sound
"Save distant music from the isles of light"
"The eternal melodies of a Summer night"

But when the gleaming stars retire, faintly the peep o'day
Reveals these little tiny folk, lo! they swiftly flee away—

The destined day arrives—and Winter sends,
A baleful messenger, with untimely frost;
He sets his mark upon the blackened flowers;
When nights are dark, he lurks in every bower.
His frosty breath among the rustling trees
Forthwith with heavy sighs, let fall the fluttering leaves.
Proclaiming thus, the approach of death
For jovial Summer time—The end of all that joy
Which endless seemed at prime.
    Brief is a Summer day
      Life and fruition cease
    Only in Paradise is found
      Continuous joy and peace.

Ode To Autumn.

Brown Autumn! Fruitful matron of the bounteous year,
In richly golden garments all arrayed—doth now appear!
Laden with store of precious things—her priceless gifts—
The mystic season she—who bids each one look forth
Unto that dreary time, when on Winter's snowy bier
The dying year in solemn state its last sad dirge will hear—

Paling fast—like some good man whose hour has come
To bid farewell to power, with all that gladdens life;
Thou leavest us—in splendor and "Happy Harvest Home!"
Abundance garnered a plentiful supply,
In granaries safely stored—in numerous barns,
Food for thy many children who on thee rely.

Thy beauty all matured—equal joy of summer days,
Is sobered by experience. With majestic gait
Thou goest steadily to meet thy destined fate—
In mists of grief thy falling tears do flow—
The happy road of Summer once so broad and light
Is narrowing now to enter on the gloom of Winter's night!
Farewell thou generous Mother!
The lingering sunbeams glittering in thy hair
Belie thine age. Thou hast a radiant smile for all.
The world is happy still—the world is fair,
But ere thou pass away, thy lesson we prepare.

That what we sow, that shall we sometime reap,
For every row of years passed by, the young, the old,
Fling tares with our good seed,
Oh! may the grains of wheat o'erweigh them,
When the scales of justice swing,
To Mercy's gentle touch,
At the final Harvesting!

"Tongues In Trees — As You Like It."

See, whirling o'er the roads, and through the narrow lanes!
The once fair robes of Summer's foliate trees;
Fall dry, and rustling to the dusty ground—
Those tender leaves in varied size and form
Once graced the lofty branches of the woods;
Now they are falling fast—falling everywhere
In rapid motion, tossing round and round,
As rough and fitful breezes blow them here and there.

Naked and bare, the once well covered boughs
All grace and charm forevermore now flown;
In faded coloring, the useless leaves,
Swept into withered heaps, forsaken lie,
Forgotten and unknown!
And all the shortening days, lament and weep
To see their beauty pass away so soon,
On which we gazed with joy in summer days,
Or sat beneath in summer nights,
In sweet companionship, to watch the silver moon.

Oh! happy joyous Summer time! how soon 'tis fled!
And gone the gaiety of our gladsome hearts,
How sorrow takes its place, to see the leaves all dead,
The unclad limbs, which once were clothed in verdant green,
And interlaced with shimmering zephyr breeze.
Where little birds in early spring, built tiny homes,
In hidden nooks, with faultless care,
Under living canopies—while softly sighing winds
Murmured lullabies to nestlings rocked in slumber sweet
Beneath the brooding mother's wings!

Too soon, too soon, they left the sheltering nest
To face a homeless world—and new found fear!
And now the year itself doth swiftly wane,
Her golden clothing changed to garments sad and drear!
The once green leaflets lose their hue and die.
No more will cool and rippling shadows dance
In glory of the sunlight of the westering sky—
Or fall upon us, as when once we lounged in lazy calm
On sunset eves, when all our tasks were done.

But yet to us the "tongues in trees" do preach
In voiceless language, of the fading leaves,
"Farewell to fleeting joys of earth," they teach,
Before it is too late, oh! mortals fly
The pleasures which are void of worth.
The next year's Spring will bring with it new leaves.
As fair as these that die—new nesting birds will mate,
And occupy the self-same trees.
And, furthermore, this little sermon preached by us,
Whose duties are now o'er, impressed be on your heart,
"The tender hopes and promises—the Springtime of a life
Come to us but once—and then for aye depart."

—Dedham Transcr

Winter.

King Winter from his northern waste,
Comes swiftly on with freezing haste,
A very hoary tyrant!
O'er Nature's children he's a bully,
Poor and weak, all know it fully,
In his conduct most unruly,
Savage and defiant!

Sharp and keen with glittering sword,
Comes his herald, bleak December;
With his clamorous blast!
We heard his piercing ruthless breath,
And felt the sweep of his rude breath,
Which laid the leaves on beds of death,
As it hurried past!

The summer song birds knew betimes
And fled away to sunnier climes
They did not dare to meet him!
But humbler birds and beasts all hie
To sheltered haunts, there safe to lie,
They trust him not as he draws nigh,
Fearing his visage grim!

Purling brooks freeze in a trice,
He covers them with sheets of ice,
As he is passing by!
They sink into their beds to hide,
Like little folks at eventide,
Tremble as they hear him ride
Wild horses in the sky!

And then his laugh! that monarch bold!
A laugh that makes your blood run cold,

You shiver by fire
In reckless style he decks the trees
With crystal jewels just to tease
Poor Mother Earth! who fears he'll seize
Her children in his ire!

Ere she lose her children quite
She spreads a matchless carpet white
Of pure and dazzling snow!
Her precious seeds which she doth store
To deck sweet summer's emerald floor
Are hidden safe, till Spring restore
New life, and beauty show.

With rising breath he creeps around,
His nipping frosts search o'er the ground,
And blacken what they find.
All who meet him unawares,
Have sundry bites, and nips and snares.
Churlish graspings he prepares,
Fetters strong to bind!

Unwilling subjects!—Unbidden guest!
This monarch rough and bold hath quest,
To force admittance in our gates!
With all his wildly boisterous train
No welcome favor will he gain.
To banish him sure we would fain!
No cordial greeting him awaits!

Perforce he enters—strong and great,
And we must forth to meet him straight.
No use to say him "Nay."
But we can soothe the ills he brings,
And mitigate life's sufferings,
The painful miseries he flings
Broadcast upon his way.

With Charity's sweet balm anoint
God's poor: and those He doth appoint
For poverty and toil.
Give care and pity for the old,
Whom misfortune's arms enfold,
And thus our Dearest Lord obey
He, who was born on Christmas Day,
Whose mission here of word and deed,
Is ours too, which we will heed,
On all our gifts and joys bestow.
Then sombre Winter, cheer may know.

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